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the VOICE

THE SPARE CHANGE MAGAZINE

august 2000
VOL. 7 no. 8



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Local Fiddler
Shannon Johnson

The Women of FolkFest 2000

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NASNA Wrap-Up & Looking at Deregulation

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INTO THE MILLENNIUM

One winter's day several years ago I was sitting in the library, gazing through the window at little birds picking bread crumbs off the snow on the courtyard. A man walked by. His head was down, his shoulders slumped, his arms hung loosely by his side, his fly was open, his penis hung out as he shuffled along, dribbling urine over the birds' bread crumbs. I knew a lot about economic poverty then, but I couldn't imagine being so poor I would value myself as little as this fellow apparently did. I wondered what had happened to this person to leave him so bereft of the simplest concept of human dignity.

People come up to me while I am vending and unburden themselves of many painful stories. One time a lady came to me and told me that she was on social assistance. She told me she couldn't believe this was happening to her. She had worked many years at the same job, then she had gotten sick for a couple of months and the job was gone just like that. Her savings were gone, she was in a state of shock, but she had found many novel ways to economize and was planning to write a book about these strategies when she got back on her feet. Some people handle the culture shock of entering the land of the poor better than others.

I lived for twenty years in the country raising kids and then suddenly found myself homeless and penniless on the streets of Edmonton just before Christmas two years ago. The feelings of sheer panic I experienced almost threw me into an emotional meltdown. I begin to understand what might have happened to the guy in the library courtyard. That first winter of selling Our Voice and shriveling up inside at every contemptuous glance is not something I would ever want to experience again.

As we move into the millennium there is no sign that the widening gap between the rich and the poor is going to close. The land of the poor is receiving more and more immigrants from the middle class. Not all will

survive the move. Not having the resources to maintain position in your former economic class is a crushing emotional event. The pain of exile can hurt far worse than economic deprivation. Losing relationships and support networks can be so traumatizing it leaves individuals totally unable to function.

There was a popular book in the late sixties called FUTURE SHOCK. It predicts that advances in technology will make many occupations obsolete and cause terrible stresses for those unable to adapt to a changing world. We are now beyond future shock. This book describes only mainstream society. It does not address the possibility of a whole separate culture evolving outside the mainstream or the parameters of this new society. There is a land of the poor now that transcends all geopolitical boundaries. Many of the citizens of this country have adapted and have lives of great personal satisfaction, despite limited resources. They have relationships, support networks, art, music, communications, in short, a culture that performs the same functions of embedding an individual in the matrix of society that are performed by parallel structures in the mainstream culture.

For the millennium I see this separate culture becoming more complex and diverging into a strong, rich, spiritual dimension. Farther and farther away from what is now called the mainstream and as its population grows becoming in turn the new mainstream culture. As the century unfolds and more and more resources become concentrated in fewer and fewer hands the greatest chal-

lenge facing individuals will be surviving the trauma of dropping into sudden extreme poverty but hanging on to their sense of self worth, vision and purpose. As in any social dislocation, some will survive, some will not. The huge influx of young people born into poverty in the last twenty years, raised by female single parents for the most part will lend this culture vitality, force and a different world view than that of preceding generations raised in a male dominated environment. Initiatives like Our Voice are the work of those who will survive. "Blessed are the poor for they shall inherit the earth."

Theresa McBryan

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HARD WORDS & SOFT VOICES

OV Writer Heather Slade reflects on the women of song

If you think folk music died with Woody Guthrie, think again. Although Guthrie has been described as the "godfather of folk", even he might have trouble distinguishing it from what we now call pop music. But that is not unusual. Pop is the shortened form of popular, and why wouldn't folk be popular?

According to the dictionary definition, "a true folk song represents a musical tradition that has been handed down by word of mouth through generations." It is part of the oral history of a culture. Folk songs have been sung for thousands of years, telling stories, instilling values and glorifying love. Not much of the basic content has changed. These days a song may tell a story about addiction, or physical abuse or racism. Folk music today tends to tackle injustice with poetic vengeance.

One cannot talk about folk music in Canada and not mention Joni Mitchell. Interestingly enough she bristles at being called a "folk-singer". "I'm a poet, a writer, a songwriter, and a damn good guitar player, and yet I'm almost always introduced merely as a folk-singer. There is just so much more to what and who I am." She feels that her male counterpart, Leonard Cohen is afforded much more respect in the music industry, even though, by his own admission, he can't sing. "I was just a girl with a guitar, no one was taking me seriously. I was taken off guard by the fickle nature of my fans", Mitchell says.

Joni now lives in California. She says even now some Canadians feel she betrayed them somehow by moving away. "I wasn't getting any respect here (Canada) and they wanted me down there. Hey, this is what I do." Making music has always been my priority." She was successful here in Canada during the 70's, but the 80's saw a steep decline in her record sales. She relocated to the States and in 1994 she headlined at Edmonton's annual Folk Festival.

It was clear that she has a loving relationship with her instruments. She caressed them and coaxed them as she sang her haunting and often gritty lyrics. It was the perfect opportunity to see her shine. The bare bones accompaniment, the naked voice blended with her intimate concert style.

Prince, Tori Amos and Chrissie Hynde (of the Pretenders) all credit Joni with influencing their musical styles. They may not be "real" folk singers but all of their music reflects the poetic, soul-baring quality of the genre. Jane Sibery, another of Canada's pop/folk singers says, "More than any other kind of music, this is the most untarnished reflection of our times." It is fluid in its nature and this is precisely its appeal to both artist and audience. It often seems deceptively simple. To the

untrained ear the difficult jazz-influenced stylings are lost, but the deep, angst ridden lyrics are hard to miss.

K.D. Lang, admits many of the folk songs being sung in festivals are not really folk songs, by definition. "We are redefining our musical and cultural expressions. I have no problem with the lines being blurred between country, jazz, folk, rock, blues, etc. If folks enjoy it, it should be called folk music!" Of course, Lang tends to blur the lines between genders with little difficulty, but even conservative women in folk seem to agree with her. Emmylou Harris, another Edmonton Folk Festival alumni, gets air play seamlessly on country, easy rock, and alternative stations. Harris has been apart of The Trio with Dolly Parton and Linda Ronstadt, but is probably best known as the grand dame of folk music.

Lilith Fair, with its host of performers, is certainly the best known recent collection of strong female folk singers. There have been seasoned performers like Bonnie Raitt, best known for her blues stylings. There



Shawn Colvin

were newcomers like Fiona Apple, who uses music as therapy, headlining with a piece she wrote after being raped. And, there were the militant feminists like Sinead O'Connor, who told the Pope to "Fuck off!" in 1990 (because of

his views on abortion) and has subsequently become a priest in an offshoot of the Catholic Church. Needless to say, there was a large variety of styles and messages to choose from at these musical buffets.

"It's encouraging to see so many young women writing and singing their own stuff," said Shawn Colvin, who is playing this year. "Themes ranged from spiritual awakenings, to moral outrage at violence in our culture, particularly that which is perpetrated by men upon women. There were songs about life that brought tears to your eyes, others that made you laugh out loud, and ones that enraged you with a sense of injustice."

"What gives us credibility with our audience is the fact that we are compulsive truth tellers in our music", says Fiona Apple, first-time Fair performer. "We are not afraid to tackle the difficult issues, the issues that affect us as women. Rape, abuse, divorce, feminism, loneliness, sexuality and the like, affect us all. I just happen to write what I feel and put it to music. It's not really me that makes it a song. It's the people who listen to it and connect to it. If they don't make any connection with it then it's just words and notes."

Although many folkies have migrated south to become recognized as real artists, the loss of talent seems to be slowing. As Canadians we have begun to sit up and take notice of their musical talents and reward them in their own land. They give us their talent and we get a musical tradition grafted into our social fabric and enriching our culture.

Our Voice's featured FolkFest performer Shannon Johnson

Since the age of eight, Shannon Johnson has been one of Alberta's most outstanding fiddlers. She began her career with the infamous McDade family ensemble and garnered a reputation Canada wide by taking top national honours in her grade 10 fiddle exam and a 1996 Juno nomination for her collaboration with Bill Bourne. In the last five years, Shannon has taken over the producer chair, recording critically acclaimed albums for Luann Koweck, Maria Dunn and Captian TrackStar.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I am responding to the article "The wasted energy we put into the environment" published in the June issue of Our Voice. John Walters states "the oil industry is too accountable to the environment" after questioning what the environment is. In my opinion the environment is us and everything around us, therefore we need to pay close attention to it. Keep it clean and don't foul it! He further states Dollars spent pleasing government standards should be aimed at creating more work for people and should be invested directly into the pockets of the oil families in this province! WOW, talk about catering to special interest groups! He goes on to say people need to take a look around them. The sky is still blue and the lakes are still filled with fish and everytime he opens his eyes while outside he sees a tree. He says nothing about the earthly environment around him has changed in the 52 years he has been alive.

I can hardly believe John Walters is so myopic that he has failed to see the orange haze hanging around our cities, a haze that was not there when I arrived in Alberta some 50 years ago. Has he noticed the leaves on some trees in some locations are turning black? Has he perhaps noticed the number of people who several times a day have to clear their throat and cough up just a tiny lump of phlegm. My doctor tells me these little lumps are the body's response to dealing with air pollution (air containing sulphur particles). Those sulphur particles were not present in the air in such quantity 50 years ago. I don't know about fish but it seems a little fishy to me that John have not observed these kind of changes.

Helge Welling

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next month in:

Our Voice

The spare change magazine

2001 Track & Field Games:
A war on the poor?
a history of major sporting
events and their impacts
on the poor.

I was swept away:
a personal account of
street sweeps.

Putting the environment
back into classrooms.

How much will good health
cost in Alberta?

Full coverage of NASNA
2000 conference

BLOOD MONEY

BLOOD MONEY

I find it hard to talk about residential schools because the pain it brings up in me is so severe. I don't claim to have the answers, in fact it is the ambiguity of life that I find so painful.

I've heard, lately, that many churches are facing the prospect of closing down due to the financial strain that the residential school settlements are causing. On one hand, I don't give a damn about them being forced out of "business", even if that "business" is salvation (to some). Let them close, let them feel the sting of annihilation like my people did. Burn them down, shove their crucifixes down their throats like they rammed it down ours. And just when I'm sure that revenge is the answer, I think of the little old ladies, you know the ones who knit booties for babies and sew quilts for the homeless. These little old ladies haven't oppressed anyone. They are only looking for a comfortable place to visit with a "god" they hope soon to see. Do we punish her for the sins of others? Does the responsibility for centuries of oppression rest on her frail shoulders?

And while we're asking questions, should we make money a suitable exchange for blood? Does my grandfather care if he "wins" ten thousand dollars for his suffering? He didn't know there was a payout for torn rectums and a beaten body. Maybe my Aunt would have enjoyed the torment more or worn her shorn head high. Maybe my Uncle

would have vomitted the priest's ejaculate out less. If he had only known. Maybe he wouldn't have always been drunk or maybe he would have at least not been mean. Maybe my mom would have learned how to laugh instead of to fear the monster that her father became. Maybe she could have discovered love as she grew instead of abuse as a child. Maybe then I wouldn't be orphaned by my elders who, too wounded, had nothing left to pass to me except the terrible twin legacy of alcohol and abuse.

Yes, I think the only answer is to bleed the churches dry. We, too, will join the masses who cry out "Never again". We'll force them--that faceless horde--to bend over and take it (figuratively, of course). Make Rome sell off its Michealangelo's, force the Queen to sell her wardrobe to pay her church's ransom and watch how the United fall, not around gay ministers, but perverted ones! Yes, let's make them pay in pounds of flesh. No cold, hard cash, but in supple, dripping skin and sinews. An exacting revenge for an unelegant holocaust

Heather Slade

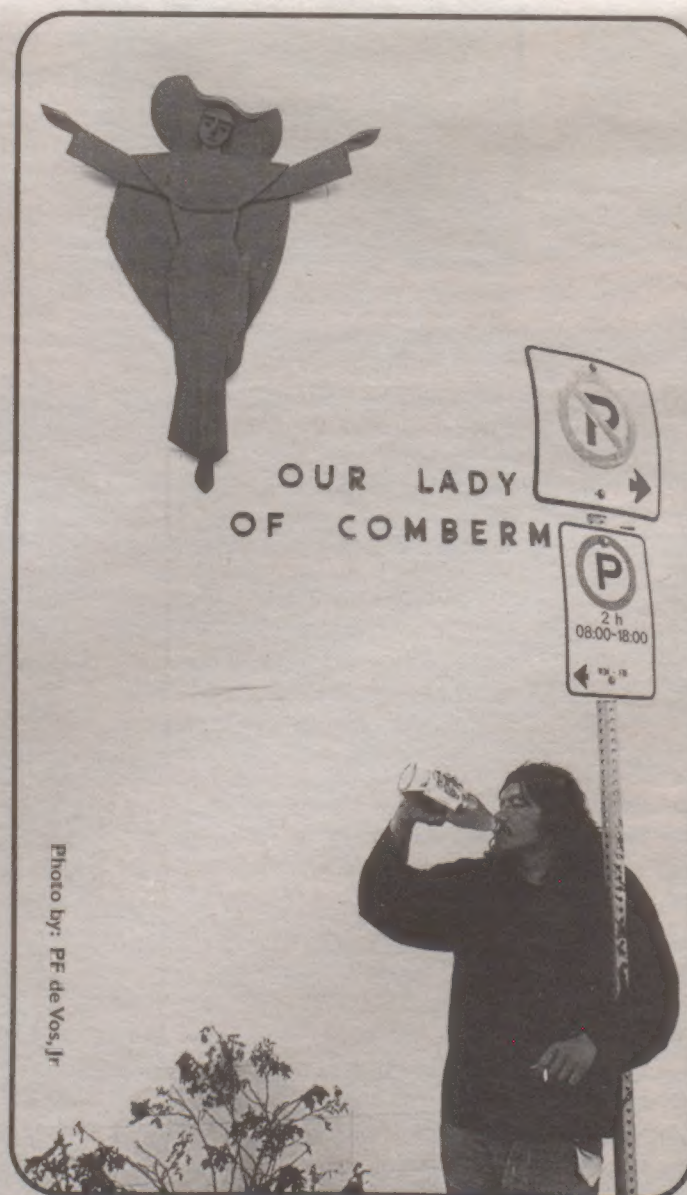
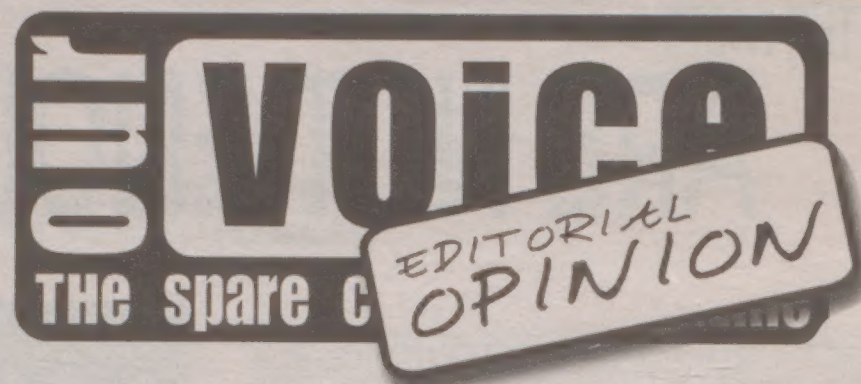


Photo by: PF de Vos, Jr

PASS THE FIRST AID KIT, THIS ONE'S A GUSHER



Recently, a proposal was put before Calgary City Council to consider new legislation on the licensing of panhandlers. If passed, the new bylaw would require all panhandlers to buy a license at a nominal fee (something in the neighborhood of \$5, I'm told), wear a numbered ID badge and adhere to a code of conduct.

It seems that the current "panhandling" bylaw, 3M99, which was enacted on March 8, 1999 has failed in a number of ways. First, it has opened up crowded pedestrian walkways, such as Stephen Avenue Mall and Barclay Mall to panning, much to the frustration of the lunchtime shoppers and diners. Second, because a panhandler must actually be caught in a specified infraction, it has confounded City Police in their efforts to identify, apprehend or even engage a disruptive panhandler.

Even though the City is not likely to pass such legislation, licensing is an interesting option. Will it allow police and outreach workers to identify and track panhandlers in the hopes of providing assistance and eliminating the increasingly aggressive behaviour of a certain group of wandering panhandlers. Perhaps it will give police more liberty to control and mistreat street people.

But there is another question to ask. Will licensing provide a degree of legitimacy to panhandling? Does it say that it's acceptable for a person to have to beg for money?

Of course there are many reasons a person may need to panhandle. Mental illness, physical debilitation and

abuse all play a role. Health care cuts have also contributed to the numbers on the street. The closure of mental health and extended care facilities in this province means that more people have to rely on meager social assistance cheques. Due to their illnesses, many are unable to hold even the most menial of positions.

Approximately half of all panhandlers are young and roughly 80 per cent of all youth on the street are there as a result of abusive family environments. Many are runaways who erroneously assumed they would be safer on the streets. Most have minimal education and have an understandable mistrust of adults that often prevents them from going back to school or seeking assistance. They have few job options. When working eight hours a day at minimum wage earns far less than a day of panning, it seems an obvious choice.

The Aboriginal peoples who are on the street have their own set of difficulties (alcoholism for example), many of which have been created by a cycle of victimization that is perpetually supported by the federal government.

One might use any of these reasons to justify panhandling. But to justify it through a licensing process? When are we going to stop using band-aid solutions for poverty?

Panhandling is unacceptable. Not because panhan-

dlers are lazy or malodorous or unkempt or drunk or any other reason we all give for not dropping coins into a hat.

The social conditions should not exist for them to be there in the first place. Self-esteem can never be gained through handouts.

Instead of looking at new ways to control or manage the problem, we should be looking at ways we can overcome it. We should be looking at existing programs to see how they can be altered or expanded to better serve those who need them. We should be creating non-hierarchical employment and education programs that allow participants to become involved in the development process. We should put more energy into support for families to identify and help children before they get to the street.

In an ideal world, panhandling wouldn't exist. Unfortunately, humankind has never managed to create utopia and in all likelihood it never will. But this doesn't mean we should stop trying.

Lisa Willemse, Editor of Calgary Street Talk

TALKING ABOUT POVERTY

It is easier to talk about poverty, than it is to talk about being poor. I realized this last week when I was invited to share, with a group of strangers, my own experience of living below the poverty line. They were interested in finding out how they could help children from economically challenged homes take advantage of sports and recreational activities. I realized that as much as I have tried to convince myself that my family's financial lack does not define us as people, there is an undercurrent of shame in me that I had somehow missed. I must have tiptoed around that sleeping giant, and until it was awakened by the glare of this tiniest of spotlights, I would have said that it didn't exist.

As much as I can swear up and down that money and material possessions are not the measure of a life, and as much as I can defend, at the top of my voice, the dignity and value of my fellow underfunded travelers, there must be something in me that doesn't quite believe it. I have some idea why.

A few years ago, when our car was a rusty, patchwork Aspen station wagon, my children and I drove into a gas station in St. Albert. As I was filling the tank, a mother and child walked by on their way into the store. "Are those bad people, Mom?" the boy asked, referring to us. "No," she replied, "They're not bad. They're just dirty."

I can't say I was comforted by her description of us. On the other hand, we had no defense. We were dirty. We had just driven in from the country, along gravel roads, in a car whose largest unperforated surface area could not have been more than a foot square. We were hot, tired, and covered with dust.

The point of this story is that it's hard not to feel ashamed when you can't quite measure up. It's hard not to feel ashamed about the way you stand out in a world where everything else looks so good, so clean. And it's hard not to feel ashamed when you know that chances are you will be this way as far into the future as you can see. There is no easy way out.



I know that this shame is unfounded; the source is external. It comes from other peoples judgments of us rather than from who we really are. That Aspen station wagon, an assault to the senses of some, was a source of

joy to us. It was a gift from a friend and it gave us the freedom to travel. At the time we stopped in St. Albert we were on our way home from the lake (the best things in life ARE free). But in a culture that places a great deal of value on financial success, bigger houses, better cars, beautiful people and exquisite home furnishings, it's difficult not to start taking the judgments placed on you into yourself.

This may have something to do with why people in economic poverty rarely speak up for themselves. It may have something to do with why, in the province of Alberta, funding is being restored to health care and education, but not to Social Services. It may have something to do with why the minimum wage in this wealthiest of all provinces stays way below the poverty line.

I do not aspire to wealth. Many of the people I know, who share the experience of poverty with me, do not aspire to wealth. Happiness for them may be a room where they don't have to share a bathroom with seven strangers. It may be having enough money to keep food at home, so they don't have to make the exhausting round of inner-city free meals at the same time as they look for work. Happiness might mean a new jacket, pair of shoes, or a stroller so they can more easily get to the bus stop with their children. Simple things that are just out of their reach.

Actually, the more I think about it the more I wonder who should really feel ashamed?

Natasha Laurence

THE FACTS

ARE NOT ENOUGH

George Descheneaux is an Our Voice vendor. Every morning at 7:15 he catches the bus to the Royal Alex hospital, where he spends three hours hooked up to the kidney dialysis machines. This keeps him alive.

Every afternoon he sells the paper on Jasper Avenue. Because George has a limited income, this also keeps him alive. Recently I spoke to George about his life.

Half way through the interview I realize that I'm not going to be able to do it. Is it the way the sun illuminates the golden hair of the child who sits in his lap? Or the slow, gentle way he talks, each word a round, soft contradiction to the hardness of his life? I have come to speak to George, a man whose life is held in place by dialysis, and underlined with waiting for a healthy kidney to replace his own. I have my notebook, my camera, and conscientiously make notes of dates and times, recording the details of his life. But the trouble that began in months before is taking shape, settling in to stay, unpacking its things.

The facts are not enough. Yet I pile them up, one on one, carefully constructing an edifice that can not hold. They miss the point. Always. Yet I seize and cling to them as if they are the only safety in a whole wild ocean:

born in 1960

married in 1980

two children

wife died in '82

children taken into custody

years of drinking

the slow death started in 1998 with his kidneys failing, dialysis once a week, then twice a week, now everyday.

The sun shines through the one small window in the basement suite down on to the double bed. It divides the room into shadows and light. George sits, cross legged on the bed, rocking back and forth and talking.

He shows me pictures taken from an old album. "This is me as a teenager. See, I was thin then. This is my



daugh-

ter.

This is my wife. This is the letterhead from the company I had, a trucking company. This is me dressed as Santa."

"I quit drinking in '93, after an impaired. The police had to shoot out the tires of the car. I don't remember a thing, but there were witnesses in court who testified they beat me, once when they pulled me out of the car and once in the cells under the station.

So I got off on the resisting arrest and assaulting an officer."

Quick scribbles of ink, words on the page. Facts. I lined them up carefully, building a story, describing a life. One line. Two lines. The framing for the outside walls.

George, himself, will not stay inside. As he lights a cigarette and talks, the whole structure shifts with the weight of the look in his eyes.

"I can't stand the machines. I pretend they're not there. One needle in this arm, out with the old blood. One needle in this arm, in with the new. If I can I sleep so I don't have to look at the machines."

The red blanket on the corner of the mattress catches the light and holds it, increases it, sends it back into the room as warmth.

I do not write that down, even though it is a fact. I can not imagine that it matters. Or maybe it matters too much to be taken seriously. "My blood type is rare, AB negative. I've been on the waiting list for a kidney for two years. Now they're telling me the next time I collapse, I'll be in the hospital permanently. The last time it happened, I woke up three days later on life support."

Out of the corner of his eye, he watches the door. Soon they will be here, his daughter and granddaughter. Only last year they found him in a curious twist of fate, a chance encounter with a friend and now there is nothing that so fills his life with meaning. That is a fact but cannot be contained as one. It is a fact like laughter is a fact, like loneliness is a fact. Like sun in golden hair and bright blue eyes, dark corners of a room.



This is the child. The granddaughter he waits for. Tiny, spinning energy wrapped in smooth white skin, little hands and feet that climb and reach, that pull on his ear and jump on his bed, pick up the phone while she says, "Hi", and he answers, "It's me, Santa." One and a half years old. Imagine his surprise to find his daughter, to discover he had a granddaughter.

He gathers her up. He sets her little body down like a precious chick in a great expanse of mother hen. Curving his arms, he broods over her. She reaches up, touches his face and laughs.

Too many times I have written things that were factual, accurate. They could stand before a court of law without shifting their eyes, and yet I know that everything they said left out the world, and what they left out I carry with me, like a burden too sacred to put down.

It is George talking, while the child plays and the sun shines in through the window that finishes it forever. When I close my notebook, heavy with facts, thank him and said goodbye, I know that I can not write George down as facts This would diminish him. All that he is and lives is too big, too true for the facts.

Natasha Laurence

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FEELING BLOATED?

MAYBE YOU HAVE A GAS PROBLEM

The Canadian Petroleum Products Institute recently released a pamphlet entitled "Gasoline prices: just give me the facts." It's a three fold flyer that tries to explain why Calgarians are ready to lynch the local petrol dealer who has set prices so high that low income drivers are left limb-less, shelling out arms and legs for a tank of juice.

The CPPI seems to have it all figured out: members that are big "movers and shakers" such as Petro Canada, Sunoco, Shell and Imperial Oil, have decided that our

"By raising [gas] prices no one has money for repairs," he says. "If something goes wrong now, I won't have the money to fix it! If I can't keep my truck running I'm back to working for someone else for less pay at an hourly wage, instead of for myself on contracts."

"Some companies, like trucking companies, start out their year by quoting prices based on fuel cost projections. When diesel goes way up how can we continue even shipping products around our country?" Navratil continues, "Truck drivers are suffering [with] diesel prices

Tracey James, another Bow Valley College student and single parent who is pursuing a career in forensic science, says the oil companies should "smarten up!" Although her \$1000 monthly rent includes groceries, she only receives \$1288 a month, leaving very little left over for cash purchases like gasoline. Having to commute daily from Airdrie into Calgary, her '81 Omega is currently chewing down \$100 each month in fuel.

"It makes it tight," James says. "I have a child..[gas prices] affect our way of living for sure. I try not to use

Why, in Alberta where oil is our major industry, is it so expensive?

overwhelmingly high gas prices are due to "local competition [which] has the greatest influence on price." CPPI says that the cost of crude oil and its refinement have only long-term price results – a funny statement considering that small gas stations are also feeling the crunch because their supply costs have increased so dramatically.

I wonder what they define as "long term" – a day, a month? It is typical of big business to attribute the fault to the little guy, and to claim that there is nothing they, the poor multi-billion dollar companies, can do to provide a little economic relief.

To be fair, oil companies have the right to make money from their product; after all we are not a communist society. However, we also know that sooner or later the crude oil will begin to run out, and unless gas can be made out of currency and coins, profits will become meaningless.

So where do we draw the line at the private sector's right to public resources? If there's one thing we know, it's that oil rich or not, the average Albertan does not profit. Gasoline is costing us just as much as if we had to pay to have it shipped in from another country.

In the search for public opinions on the current situation, I have had to bravely duck murderous looks for merely mentioning the recent 10-cent per litre hike that has us emptying our wallets at the pumps. After surviving one particularly virulent glance, I managed to jot down the opinions of local tradesman Les Navratil, a flooring technician who has been working in the carpet/tile industry for 12 years.

Accustomed to being at the low end of the blue-collar pay scale, Navratil says his "payload" (the working truck he purchased two years ago) is the only reason that he has been able to gain his own contracts and begin working for himself. His '78 GMC Suburban is the only means of moving hundreds of pounds of tools and supplies, at an average minimum gasoline cost of \$60 per week – that's \$240 a month out of his \$1500 monthly pay. This amount accounts for his work – if he wants to go camping or on a trip for the weekend, that figure can easily double.

"I used to pay 54 cents per litre," says Navratil. "Right now it's 63 cents and it was 67 cents just a little while ago..It gets tough getting close to the next pay round. I try to save money and I end up not buying food just so I can keep running my truck. No gas, no truck...no work!

With such high fuel costs, Navratil is unable to cope with unexpected expenses.

jumping up like that..Man, it's just ridiculous! I don't think anyone sitting behind a desk setting prices knows what they're doing to low income tradesmen like myself."

Although tradesmen and truckers suffer the heaviest blow from increasing gasoline and diesel prices, others also have a hard time coping. Aleshia Pelchat is a single parent who is studying law at Bow Valley College. Her '95 Pontiac Sunfire costs \$30 a week to fill. Not so bad, until you consider she makes



my vehicle and to take the transit more, but living in a rural area forces me to pay the price they set for fuel."

James has little regard for the oil companies who "aren't there for the economy or the people, just to line their own pockets." A former trucker herself, she says, "the way the trucking industry is now – you don't turn your wheels, you don't make money."

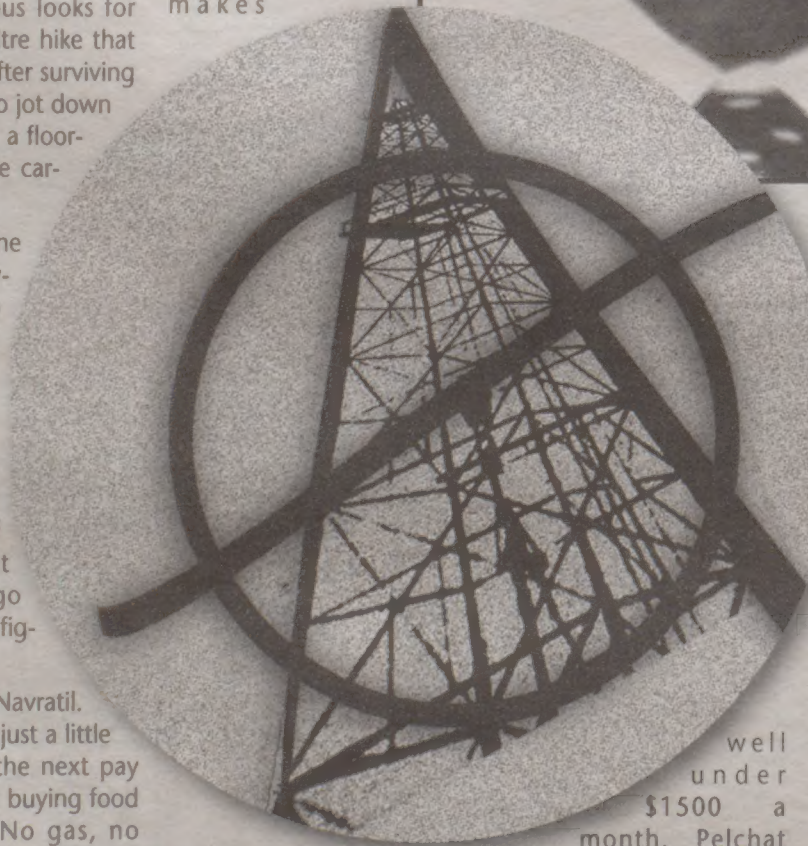
"For the price of crude nowadays, fuel should not be as expensive as it is." Like Navratil, she wonders, "why, in Alberta, where oil is our major industry, is it so expensive?"

No doubt the opinions of Navratil, Pelchat and James reflect those of the majority of poor Albertans, many of whom will be making their feelings known at the protests planned for the World Petroleum congress this month. City Police have already begun making contingency plans in case the crowd "gets out of hand."

Should the crowd become enraged, all the attention will be turned away from the very real economic pressures that people want relief from, and focuses it on the glorification of violence borne from absolute frustration. Very plainly put, if the oil industry does not want to be harassed by angry protestors, perhaps they should be looking at reducing the current costs of oil and petroleum products, which would in turn help the economy.

But until that is done, I guess I'll have to keep my CPPI pamphlet that assures me that "market competition is to your advantage."

Virginia Servage, Calgary Street Talk



well under \$1500 a month. Pelchat

says that gas prices have dramatically reduced the amount of groceries she has bought in the last couple of months, yet she needs her vehicle to get herself and her children to school and daycare.



STREET PA

organize



JUSTICE
JUSTICE

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CORPORATE
WHORE



OurVoice Editor and NASNA Chairperson, speaks to police during an anti-poverty demonstration

PAPERS UNITE



Last July, Our Voice hosted the 2000 North American Street Newspaper Association Conference in Edmonton. Representatives from over 40 cities gathered to continue the fight against poverty and injustice in society.

Photos by PF de Vos, Jr.

"WHAT DOES UNDERWEAR HAVE TO DO WITH STREET PAPERS?"

Underwear is political. One could write a whole book on the international political economy of underpants. The blue and red beauties gracing my nether regions this afternoon were crafted in Indonesia. My guess is that most of Edmonton's "essentials" are kept together by products manufactured in Third World or developing nations. This is nothing new, and nothing particular to undergarments. Most clothing worn by Canadians is produced by Third World workers who are paid little by their First World employers. The comfort of First World units, therefore, are not just a fact or a given; our underwear is loaded; our underwear is political.

Globalization and global inequality are not foreign concepts – you can find them under your pants, only a breath away from the jewels. The hands of Third World workers (mostly women, and young people) sew the cloth closest to First World gonads. The organs responsible for reproducing Western children are kept warm and protected by materials produced by children, women, and some men whose warmth and comfort are constantly displaced by First World wants. One could even go as far to argue that Canada is suffering from subconscious pedophilia in that the little fingers of young female and male workers have once methodically danced along the seams now rubbing against our sexual organs. Underpants are a particularly disturbing site for politics and material inequality.

Street papers have very little to do with underwear, except that they too have politics, and also help to show how every facet of our lives is potentially political. Underwear also seems to attract peoples' attention, so hopefully after dexterously readjusting, or scratching yourself, you will read on about Street papers in the

Street paper being peacefully imprinted by your finger tips.

Street paper politics

For too long our understanding of politics has been confined to legislature or parliament buildings. Politics has been understood exclusively as government; something separated or removed from our daily lives. Street papers are a media that challenge the freezing of politics as government or bureaucracy. For Street newspapers, politics is on the street – the fact that so many people go without is not a fact of life, or a given, it is politically charged. Naming poverty political and contestable is a Street paper's first political effect.

The North American Street Newspaper Association defines a Street paper as a publication that informs the public about poverty issues and/or creates employment for low-income and homeless people through the sales. Written largely by vendors and people who have, or are experiencing poverty, the stories come from a particular perspective – one given column space nowhere else in the world. The poetry of street paper writers give context to the layered complexity of poverty. The stories help show how the intersection of structural bias along racial, gender, and class lines work together ensuring the poverty of some and the wealth of others. The writing subtly and not so subtly reveals how poverty is larger than any one person. The stories written from the poverty perspective are meant for a broad audience, and work to connect communities and perspectives separated by more than train tracks. Street papers facilitate real communication between people from differing circumstances – they help spark the dialogue needed to address the inequalities stifling our communities' potential.

Creating Communities

While connecting communities is a primary street paper function, community creation is the Street paper's greatest political effect. Street papers and their vendors and writers create an alternative space where they feel comfortable expressing themselves. The Street paper community empowers people to redefine and rewrite themselves – the "poor, homeless, jobless, good-for-nothing" becomes a published writer, reporter, journalist, poet, artist, critic, and philosopher. Also, instead of the "lazy" pan-handler in need of a hand-out, a Street paper recreates the poor as educators who can give a hand-up to the more comfortable classes who may know very little about the droves of their community members and neighbors living in poverty. By providing the mental, physical, technical and emotional resources needed to address poverty in our communities, Street papers sweat politics. Street papers write our world's wrongs.

Street papers work on so many levels, and accomplish so much – their effects are hyphenated. Street papers are Material-Semiotic actors. Material because they provide an income opportunity for people who often have nowhere else to turn – and simultaneously semiotic because they arm the poor with the tool of writing. We live in a culture of signs, categories and names. If one is named poor in our culture, then they are also stupid, lazy, drunk, bad with money... Street papers empower the named, the branded, and the written to take control of the very language that has helped perpetuate their marginalization. Street papers are the poor writing back – demanding a change in their material-semiotic condition. Street papers bleed politics. Vote Our Voice.

James Rowe

SLUM LANDLORDS, SHACKS AND THE STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE

It's no secret that there is a severe shortage of good, affordable housing in Edmonton. We've had counts of the number of people who are homeless, and we've had a Task Force look at the homeless problem in our city. These efforts have added to a Canada-wide call for additional government money to end homelessness. The Feds, through their Human Resources and Development Department (HRDC), have put up a few million dollars and have started their own talks with "local communities" about building some kind of plan for addressing homelessness in major cities from coast to coast.

In the meantime, people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness wait. Where do they wait?

They wait in run-down, bug-infested, garbage strewn shacks throughout our city. They wait in places run by slum-landlords who pay peanuts for properties and then abuse the poor by collecting premium rents for places that most people wouldn't live in.

Last month, I met some people in just such a situation. Let's call them Dick and Jane.

Dick and Jane are Native. They don't have a lot of schooling. They've both gotten in trouble before, so their past mistakes make it hard for them to find jobs. They also struggle with addictions and Jane's health is pretty bad. You know the story. They are the kind of people who get pushed around just about everywhere they go.

How did I meet them? I had received a call from Patricia Tymko, a concerned citizen in the Eastwood community, a small triangle of single-family homes just west of the Northlands Coliseum. There was a house in the area that was in really bad shape. It had been condemned before, but now it was open again and people were living there.

I asked her if she could find out if anyone else in the area was concerned. The next week she invited me to a meeting with eighteen concerned citizens. They heard about how the four or six people living in the home were paying between \$1,200.00 and \$1,800.00 per month to live in this tiny house; how the house had broken windows and a garbage-strewn lawn; how the house had been fixed-up by a young man, and how the landlords had forced him out of the house after he finished fixing it up.

Why did they force him out? So they could move in a group of very desperate people who would sign their welfare shelter allowances over to them. So they could make a lot more money off the house. The owner, Vicky Wong, and her sister, Monica Leung, have a number of these houses in various parts of the city. They exploit desperate people and our public assistance system so they can profit.

One of the challenges, as Ms. Tymko puts it, is, "Some of the people living in these conditions need someone to look out for them." She's tried the workers and supervisors at the Welfare office. They say they are only responsible for giving their clients their money, they can't tell them how to spend it.

Mike Brown of the Safe Housing Committee, Nick Skippings of the Capital Health Authority and Constable Elvin Toy of the Police Service are concerned about these people, but they also have to act in the interests of preserving a safe and healthy environment for all of us, including Dick and Jane. They try to hold off taking action on a house to allow people living in them to find new places to live.

The real issue is power. Dick and Jane have almost none. Their neighbours have a little. They organized

and were able to get some important people, including Mayor Bill Smith, to pay attention to the problem. But will they act?

In the meantime, the slum landlords seem to have the most power. They have the money, the housing and they are able to intimidate their tenants with various threats. They know how to use the addictions of their tenants to keep them renting. They know how to manipulate their tenants so they can keep a stream of tenants cycling through their houses.

I have watched Ms. Leung in action. She was able to goad one of the tenants into a fight with her. As soon as the tenant pushed her, Ms. Leung began to accuse the tenant of assault. It is an easy way to get a tenant who is fed up with her, or at tenant who is willing to stand up to her, to move out. She tried to blame the anger of the tenants on me.

Ms. Leung is only one of the lousy landlords in the north-central communities of Edmonton. These people have the power of organized money. They have the law and the indifference of lawmakers and bureaucrats on their side.

The tenants need to counter this power. Saul Alinsky once said, "The only thing you get is what you are strong enough to get – so you had better organize." The people who live in these houses have to organize and stand up for themselves. They need the support of local organizations to do this. They don't need advocates and another community plan, they need to take action and they need people who will show them how. We must then stand behind them when they confront these landlords and the lawmakers and bureaucrats who protect them. Their waiting time is over!

John Reilly

John Reilly is the Community Organizer with the Community Action Project (CAP) in Alberta Avenue. CAP is currently working with tenants and homeowners in the area to organize to improve housing and protect tenants in the area. Their office is located at 9516-114 Avenue. Their phone number is 474-8318.

POVERTY PIMPS INC

Recently the SF BAY GUARDIAN, followed a week later by the SF CHRONICLE, reported on the outrageous salaries, perks and spending practices of Catholic Charities of San Francisco. Catholic Charities' executive staff are enjoying unprecedented financial rewards, while one of the last remaining residential programs for homeless youth in San Francisco - Guerrero House - was being eliminated from their budget.

Two years ago the CHRONICLE reported on the outrageous salaries, perks and spending practices of several non-profits under the headline "Charity Begins at Home for Well Paid Executives of Religious Groups."

The only difference these last two years?

Frank Hudson - CEO Catholic Charities San Francisco:

1996-97 \$145,664.00 annual salary

1998-99 \$172,560.00 annual salary (PLUS \$73,000.00 in reimbursable expenses during those two years, including four-star restaurant and hotel tabs and vanity surgery)

In spite of the recent articles, chances are very good that Catholic Charities will continue receiving millions of dollars of City money for their programs and administration. Despite a brief "investigation" by Catholic Charities' Board of Directors, business will continue as usual at SF's largest social service provider.

You see, while Catholic Charities may have been recently exposed, they are certainly not the only "charitable" organization in SF raking in big bucks on behalf of poor people, and then treating them as a supermarket would handle the latest hot commodity - put them by the check-out counter when they're "sexy," then toss them in the dumpster when they're not.

What drives this callousness?

Funding, \$\$\$, moolah, dinero, bucks.

Who controls the money?

Our government... please note I did not say "we do," I said "our government." Our government funds these monolithic, corporate "charities," and by law is also supposed to be monitoring them. All City-funded non-profits are required to submit independent audits every year to the City departments that fund them. These audits are contracted by those agencies, and the accounting firms that perform them are under contracts signed by the chief executive officer of the agency under audit.

These services are usually paid for at market rate... anyone beginning to see a conflict here?

For over a decade, numerous independently-audited City-contracted agencies have been periodically "busted" for inappropriate spending practices. This proves all those yearly audits have been worthless. It's human nature not to bite the hands that feed you. And it's common for corporate America's bosses to reap staggering financial rewards for "downsizing."

It now seems to be the practice for non-profit America as well.

Where's the public trust? Where's the public service?

Where's the people over individual profit?

Who's minding the mint while of millions of dollars are being shifted from cash benefits to welfare-to-work "Life Skills Training" courses?

Who's tracking all the corporate non-profits being created as Business Improvement Districts and Housing Corporations?

Funny you should ask. In the same timeframe that Frank Hudson got almost \$30,000 a year in raises, our



Dept. of Human Services increased its homeless contract monitoring staff by between 6-7 FTEs to its current staffing level of at least 12-13. The Dept. of Public Health is positively overrun with contract monitoring staff (since it no longer provides much in the way of actual health services), and staffing for the Mayor's Office on Homelessness has gone from 1.5 FTEs to 4 FTEs (plus one right-wing consultant).

NONE of these staff people are assigned to do outreach to clients or frontline staff, and the Coalition on Homelessness' Monitoring Committee still goes unheeded. Yet, in both the 1998 and 2000 Chronicle articles no city contract staff are quoted, and on both occasions the City's response was feigned surprise and outrage.

The audits must have shown that while Frank Hudson was billing an average of \$500 in weekly lunch expenses, 18 homeless kids at Guerrero House had a total weekly food budget of \$300. No-one was paying attention. The audits had to have shown the salaries of top executive staff, and especially the most recent raises to the top four - totaling over \$111,000.00 in one year!

Under the guise of helping homeless people, Catholic Charities (and/or the Archdiocese of San Francisco) has accumulated at least six prime pieces of San Francisco real estate into its portfolio as assets, its executives are growing wealthy (even by San Francisco standards), and it continues to periodically discard programs that are no longer "sexy" behind the rationale that these programs are "losing money." And the whole time politicians and policymakers are getting free dinners at Zuni's and Star's courtesy of Frank Hudson (and off the backs of some homeless youth), while our City contract managers dummy up.

When confronted with the fact that the president of Catholic Charities USA, Rev. Fred Kammer, is paid only \$95,227, Frank Hudson's response was, "He's taken a vow of poverty and I haven't." Evidently, Mr. Hudson expects the young residents of Guerrero House to take that vow as well.

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LOOKING AT DE-REGULATION

On July 17th, Poverty in Action, hosted a press conference to discuss Epcor's proposed power rate increases of 5%. Utility increases are of particular concern to Poverty in Action, because, as Coordinator Deanna Shorten points out, low income people tend to live in housing that is old and energy inefficient. Utility costs in older buildings can be two to three times higher than those in newer, more energy efficient homes.

Epcor claims the 5% power rate increase is necessary for two reasons. Electricity supply has decreased due to increased demand and natural gas prices have risen since the beginning of the year.

When asked if Epcor has a plan in place to assist people who find themselves unable to deal with utility rate increases, Lynn Hutchings, spokesperson for Epcor, lobbed the ball to the Premier's office. "We hope the government will look into that."

According to Joanne Rosnau at the Premier's office, "the government is exploring ways to shield fixed income earners from utility rate increases." Rosnau claimed that Premier Klein has said there may be a program in place by September to assist people living on fixed incomes with their utility payments.

While Deanna Shorten agrees the provincial government must be involved, she points out that Epcor is a "publicly owned utility created to provide service to all people regardless of income." Instead, Epcor appears to be "trying to emulate private enterprise" and "has little concern for the consumer."

Epcor's profits in the first quarter of 2000 were \$37.2 million, up from \$24.4 million in the same period last year. According to Epcor spokesperson Lynn Hutchings, these are overall profits and are not important to the price increases. Epcor is divided into six companies and each, including the electricity provider, is expected to stand on its own and turn a profit.

The corporate mentality that exists in this publicly held company is an outgrowth of deregulation. In 1996, the City of Edmonton created Epcor out of its utility services with the intention of having Epcor compete in an open, deregulated marketplace. The City of Edmonton is Epcor's only shareholder. Last year, the city received \$70 million in dividends.

While marketplace assessments and city revenue requirements are hard to argue, they are difficult to swallow for people who live on fixed incomes. Shorten points out that Don Lowry, CEO and President of the publicly

held Epcor earns a salary of \$389,797. Board members are paid \$10,000 a year just for being on the board. For meetings they earn between \$125 and \$600. This contrasts dramatically with a person earning the minimum wage salary of \$12, 272 a year.

The purpose of deregulation is purportedly to provide customers with a choice of electricity providers. The Epcor web site states: "deregulating the retail sale of electricity, companies marketing power will be encouraged to seek efficiencies and develop the best rates for electricity." The theory is that an "open, competitive marketplace in the long run is the best guarantee of low prices and customer satisfaction."

Epcor President Don Lowry says fluctuating gas prices "are an anomaly and not linked to deregulation." Deanna Shorten clarifies that the rate increases are a result of the preparation for deregulation.

Shorten highlights the deregulation of the telephone industry. Since Telus was deregulated, the average cost of phone bills have doubled. In one inner city school, 80% of the children come from families where there are no telephones. Across the city, more than 2000 children live in homes where there is no phone.

Shorten worries about the parallels between the telephone industry and the electricity industry. While not having a telephone is a possible safety issue, being unable to afford electricity in Alberta could be a matter of life and death.

Rebecca Lippiat-Long

THE POETRY OF



MARC D. GOLDFINGER

Boy

Why aren't you out playing baseball with the other boys; your father is very tired because he's been working so hard; hold on to the leash when you walk the dog; boys your age don't wet the bed; when your father comes home you'll get the strap; you can't just stay in and read all the time; stop that crying; lower your voice, the neighbors will hear; this is Steven and he is a good Jewish boy; how come you always seem to find the mud which you are covered with when you come home; you'll never amount to anything; don't drink from the stream because it's filled with germs; there are no such things, they only exist in your imagination; if you keep heading that way, you will get to where you are going; there is nothing under your bed, go to sleep; I don't want you to play with him anymore because he will get you in trouble; your father has to work late tonight; God will punish you for that; I have to go to work because we need the money; the babysitter was bad that is why that happened to you; we will get another babysitter; lower your voice the neighbors will hear; stop that crying right now; mow the lawn; vacuum the rug; do the dishes; this is Bruce and he is a good Jewish boy; all you ever do is sit around and read; you are too much of a dreamer and you will never amount to anything; she is a bad girl and there are some girls that will get you into trouble and you will know what I mean when you get older; join the boy scouts; no, not that troop, it is filled with troublemakers, we will take you to a scout troop that meets at the Jewish temple; boys don't do things like that; see, God punished you; I said stop that crying or else; no, there was nothing on the back of that chair in the yard, things like that don't exist, you have an overactive imagination; boys your age don't wet the bed; your father has to work this weekend; I can't believe that you were thrown out of the boy scouts; lower your voice, the neighbors will hear; you can't just sit around and read all the

time; don't go over to their house anymore, they are not nice people; you will know what I mean when you get older; if you keep heading that way, you will get to where you are going; what are you doing in the bathroom so long, open that door; God will punish you for that; things like that don't exist, you were seeing things; you need to come down to earth and stop daydreaming; why don't you go out and play ball like a normal boy; I don't care if they go out after supper; you must stay in; lower your voice, the neighbors will hear; your father is tired, don't bother him; if you don't stop that crying, I'm going to give you something to cry about; they are white trash and are not like us; normal boys don't do that; why don't you ever bring homework home from school; see, God punished you; don't ever talk about things like that; I'm going to wash your mouth out with soap; where did you get that book, give it to me right now; your father and I don't know where you came from; this is Arnie and he is a good Jewish boy; your father will be very upset with you when he gets home from work; were you down at the railroad tracks again with those boys; if you keep heading that way, you will get to where you are going; why don't you hang around with the nice Jewish boys that we introduce you to all the time; I can't believe that you still wet the bed; I saw it in the back yard; it is on the lawn chair; look mama look; I don't see anything, what an imagination you have; be quiet the windows are open and the neighbors will hear; you will never amount to anything; are you crying again, just stop it right now; your father will be off from work this Sunday and we will all do something together for a change; what do you mean that you don't want to come, I won't take no for an answer; this is Irving and he is a nice Jewish boy; what are doing in the bathroom; you are not my son; why are you crying?

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EXPOSURE (PART2)

A play by Fidel (A satirical look at poverty in Canada)

FOOD AUCTION

Auctioneer: Good day, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Albert Food Auction. On the block today is 100 grams of chicken stock. You can make a hot nourishing broth for your children, if you insist on having them. What is the bid for 100 grams of chicken stock?

Consumer: (Holding up garbage bag) 39 cents?

Conrad Black: I bid \$3,000 but I'll only buy it if it leans to the right.

Auctioneer: Sold to Conrad Black!

Auctioneer: Next on the block is a boneless, skinless chicken breast; low in fat and high in protein, if you like that sort of thing. Produced right here in Alberta, where there are probably a billion chickens. What is the bid for this priceless gem?

Consumer: (Holds out garbage bag) \$1.49?

Ghermezians: \$9,000!

Auctioneer: (Blows whistle) Sold to the Ghermezians, for their banquet with the Treasury Branch.

Auctioneer: Finally on the block is this succulent pork roast. You've probably heard of pork, Western Canada supports about 4 million pigs. But now, the Asian pork market has collapsed and we have a nasty surplus. Sshh, it's a secret. What am I bid for this tasty pork treat?

Consumer: (Holds up garbage bag) \$3.60?

Paul Martin: \$15,000!

Auctioneer: (Blows whistle) Sold to Paul Martin, the biggest pig of all.

MARTHA STEWART

Martha Stewart: Hello, I'm Martha Stewart. Today we have a question from Donna. Donna is a criminologist. She worked in a car wash before she became PARALYZED. Donna has a food budget of

\$30 a MONTH. She wants to now if we have any fun things she can do with bread and margarine. Well, of course we do, silly. You're just lacking in imagination. First, you put the margarine on one side of the bread. The next day, you put the margarine on the other. It's easy. You can bake bread, you can fry it and you can toast it. Boiled bread is considered a delicacy in many THIRD WORLD countries. I understand you can even make shoes out of bread and margarine but I don't have the recipe. Perhaps the GOVERNMENT can send me one. It's a good thing

POWER

Enter Patricia and Chick. They pass a bottle of wine between them. They drink and stagger around.

Patricia: I'm Patricia.

Chick: I'm Chick.

Patricia & Chick: WE work for the government.

Patricia: Pass the power, Chick.

She passes the bottle.

Chick: Here's the power, Patricia.

Chick: I adjusted a welfare cheque to recover 32 cents a month.

Patricia: I denied a wheelchair to a handicapped boy.

Chick: Pass the power, Patricia.

Patricia: Here's the power, Chick.

Chick: After I adjusted the cheque of that pig, I sent her a number of letters threatening to cut her off.

Patricia: I didn't tell the handicapped brat the proper procedures for getting a wheelchair.

Chick: Pass the power, Patricia.

Patricia: Here's the power, Chick.

Player: I propose a guaranteed annual income of \$1,000,000 per month with full medical benefits and no workers.

Chick: Did you see what they did?

Patricia: Those Commies brought in a Guaranteed Annual Income!

Chick: Pass the power, Patricia.

Patricia: (turns the bottle upside down) It's gone

SUCCUBUS

Enter Succubus

Succubus: (Sexy Voice) I am Succubus, your Income Worker. I am your worst nightmare. I sit on your face. I can come into your home any time I please. I can come under your door and through your window. There is no escape. I am on your phone and I your mailbox. I rummage through the underwear of single women, looking for men's things. I am pretty. I investigate your neighbors. I know the address of your bank. I earn \$40,639 per year. There are thousands just like me. (ATTACKS AUDIENCE, RANTING AND RAVING) How much coffee do you drink? When was the last time you had conjugal relations with THAT MAN? Sign here or I'll cut you off. (STOPS AND SNIFFS) Is that an overpayment? I smell an overpayment. (RUNS OFF, CALLING) You there, stop!

FRAUD

Player One: 4% of people on welfare abuse the system.

Player Two: 20% of Canadians cheat on their taxes.

Player One: People who committ Welfare fraud are 80% more likely to end up in prison than those who commit tax evasion.

Player One & Two: Whoopee!

Our Voice and the North American Street Newspaper Association would like thank the following supporters of the NASNA 2000 Conference hosted here in Edmonton.

- Vue Weekly
- Alberta Weekly Newspaper Association
- University of Alberta Students Union
- Millwoods TownCentre
- Edmonton Sun
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CEC ON THE TOWN

Cec's thought of the month:

"We're often so caught up in our destination that we forget to appreciate the journey, especially the goodness of the people we meet along the way. Appreciation is a wonderful feeling, don't overlook it."

I've found another gem of an eating place for you to check out. It's called COUNTRY COOKIN', located at 10915-156 St. They will fill your bellies but not empty your pockets. The restaurant has been there for 30 years. Mother Margaret and daughter Nita run the business with help from son-in-law Randy. The hours are Monday to Friday 6 A.M. to 4 P.M. They are open on Sat. 6 A.M. to 3 P.M.. Outside catering is also available for small functions for up to 60 people.

The restaurant offers home cooked meals, at reasonable prices, good atmosphere and great service. The breakfast special before 11 A.M. is \$3.75, after, \$4.75 till closing. Breakfast items include, omelettes, pancakes, egg dishes with a choice of pork or beef sausages with a choice of fruit as well as potato side dishes. Prices range from \$3.15 to \$6.95 for steak and eggs. Lunch offers 2 choices of soup, from \$1.25 to \$1.65, with a dinner roll at \$1.65 to \$1.95. A large selection of sandwiches are available. They cost \$2.00 to \$4.50 for cold sandwiches and the hot sandwiches are \$5.15 to \$5.95. Entrees including, steak, liver and onions, pork chops, and a variety of hamburgers, with deserts costing between \$6.95 and \$7.95 They have old fashioned milkshakes for \$2.75.

There is plenty of free parking right in front.

Whoops I goofed, last months' personality, says he not magnificent, but is Virgo the Eccentric, my apologies, for getting the name wrong, but I and others who have seen him, still think he's magnificent.

Special events August/2000

Heritage days at Hawrelark Park, CariWest Festival downtown, and the famous Edmonton Fringe Festival, the Folk Festival, at Gallagher Park. Have a great rest of the summer and have fun.

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      XZENON A
  
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Sucker Creek First Nation NNADAP Program

*Be aware of the harm that alcohol
and drugs can do!*

*The youth are our future so let's
teach them to follow traditional
Native values and not drugs &
alcohol.*

For further information call:
Patsy Calliou
Ph: (780) 523-4390

Edmonton Public Library presents



Kids... sign up at 16 library
locations in Edmonton.

Attend programs during
the summer:

- Blast Off with Bugs!
- Heavenly Bodies
- Do You Want to be a Spaceman?
- Creepy Crawly Capers
- Bugs that Bug
- All About Flight... and more

Free Summer Reading Program for children of all ages
June 17 to August 19, 2000

Read for 90 minutes a week (that's only 15 minutes a day!)
to get your summer reading program booklet stamped
at more than 150 public libraries in Alberta.

Call your local Edmonton Public Library
branch for details.

Edmonton
Public Library

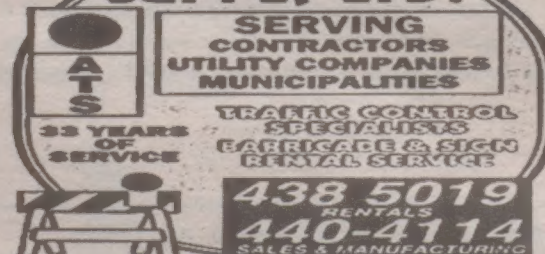
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GEORGE DESCHENEUX

John Zapantis

Our Voice vendor George Descheneaux treats his place of employment as more of a meeting place for connecting with the community.

"Well, it really means everything to me. It gives me something positive, where I can be around people. It shows me there are people out there who care."

George's attitude has changed considerably since he started vending for Our Voice. The experienced vendor has some words of advice for beginning vendors.

"New vendors should be polite to the customers, to people, whether they donate anything or buy the paper."

You can find George, our "Sitdown Vendor" seated on his favorite location on 101 Street and Jasper Avenue next door to The Baraka Café.

**VENDOR
OF THE
MONTH**

EVERY
Authorized vendor
has a **BADGE!**

Our Voice



**V
E
N
D
O
R
B
A
D
G
E**

Vendor Name _____
Number _____
Authorized by _____

OUR VOICE VENDOR'S CODE

- I will be sober at all times while working.
- I will be polite to all members of the public.
- I will vend only in areas that are authorized.

CITIZEN OF THE MONTH

Cec Garfin

Jerry Schafer



age of Canadian based care givers.

In December 1999 work began on putting together a second web site relating to survivors of violent crimes. Multi-media components are also part of the overall package, including printed literature, plus speakers to talk to young school kids who might be most likely to be involved in criminal activity, either as a victim or as perpetrators. The initiative for this program came from Jerry's own past. His father walked out on him, and his family leaving them destitute.

Jerry became involved with the wrong crowd and ended up on the wrong side of the law, which led to the accident that changed his life. Jerry doesn't want to see other kids go through the hell he has endured. He says, "the program and all the work will be worth it if it saves even one child's life."

"We as a society must fight aggressively against poverty, that in many cases is a contributing factor in leading individuals to criminal activity."

Every month in Our Voice, we will be featuring someone who has gone the extra kilometre in their lives or in their careers to make a difference in the lives of those who are less fortunate. The Citizen of the Month will receive a dinner for two courtesy of the Garneau Cafe Mosaics on Whyte Avenue.

Cafe Mosaics



**Our Voice
Magazine and Café
Mosaics'**

Citizen of the Month

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The Happy Page Challenge:

"How much would you pay to have Stockwell Day table dance at your birthday party in a thong?"



Nic & Dave would shell out \$100.

"We'd like to measure up his junk!"



Hilliary Best will pay no more than \$100.

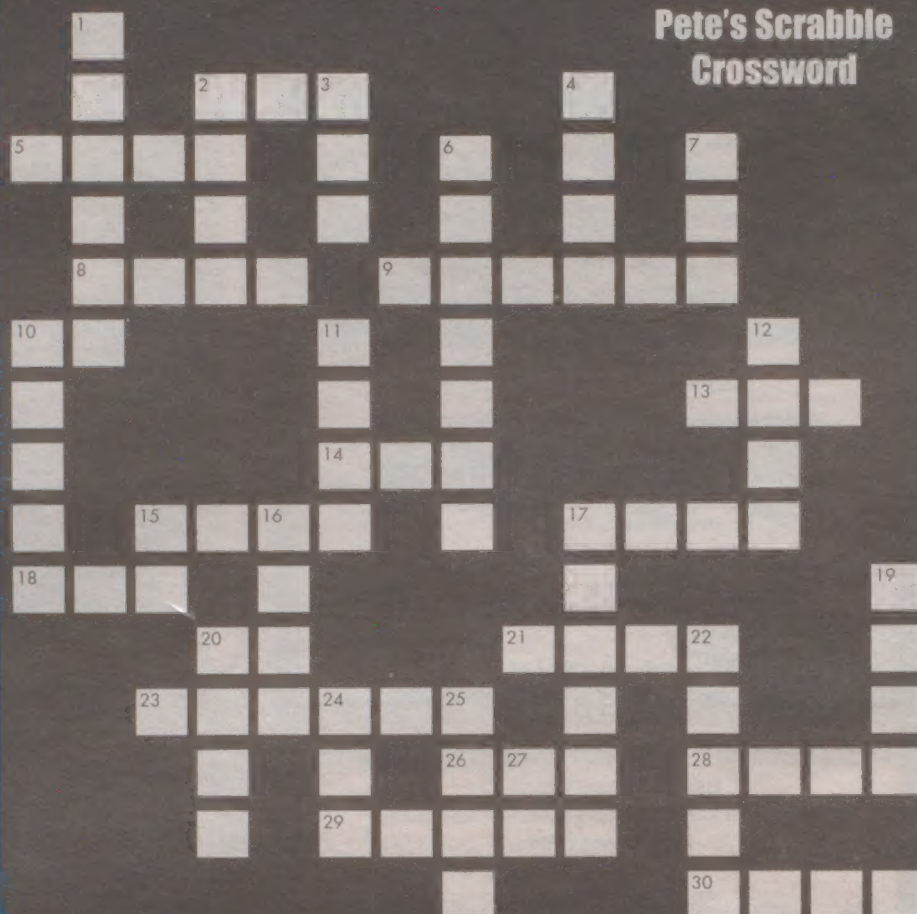
"He can rollerblade but can he dance?"



Kelly S. says he'd pay a big FAT \$0.

"I'd rather he come to dinner and we pray about the de-criminalization of marijuana."

Pete's Scrabble Crossword



ACROSS

- 2) This one's for you
- 5) Hourly salary
- 8) Give up
- 9) Nook and _____
- 10) Iron (abbr.)
- 13) Can. prov.
- 14) Spanish uncle
- 15) Comics
- 17) Goose talk
- 18) Battle _____
- 20) More of 10 across
- 21) Worm's ultimate goal
- 23) Miniature billboard
- 26) Nautical affirmative
- 28) After dinner candy
- 29) Donator
- 30) Celestial body

DOWN

- 1) Quick look
- 2) Necklace ornament
- 3) Not quite there
- 4) Egocentric
- 6) Sky's end
- 7) _____ the piper
- 10) Latin vegetation
- 11) Writes hastily
- 12) Comes before dawn
- 15) Not them
- 16) Pedal digits
- 17) Shaman
- 19) Pinball infraction
- 20) Car maker
- 22) Big books
- 24) Pull
- 25) Dance party
- 27) You of old

Remember politics is about
people not money.

-MSW

Soupline Bob

